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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
3 April 1975

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Indochina
(As of 1600 EST)
No. 1

SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The political situation in Saigon remains confused. There is no sign as yet that President Thieu is ready to relinquish power, but some maneuvering to arrange his ouster, spearheaded by Senate president Tran Van Lam is underway. Thieu earlier had requested Lam to make proposals for the reorganization of the government. Lam, armed with yesterday's unanimous senate vote expressing no confidence in Thieu and calling for a change in leadership, is moving far ahead of what the president had in mind.

2. Lam is now proposing to Thieu that his government be replaced by a new "executive council" headed by former vice-president Ky and including Lam and other "elders in politics and the army." Thieu might continue to occupy the presidency in a figurehead capacity, but Lam is suggesting that Thieu's resignation and complete withdrawal from the political scene would be preferable.

25X1X6 3. Although Lam's proposal has the support of Ky and some senior officers such as General Vien, the chairman of the Joint General Staff, President Thieu may still be able to command enough support from his military commanders to thwart this move.

NSA review completed

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The Military Situation

4. Communist-initiated activity in the provinces ringing Saigon has been largely limited to light shellings of government outposts. By early April 3, some 1,000 government troops had reached Lai Khe, some 25 miles north of Saigon, following their planned abandonment of Chon Thanh in southern Binh Long Province. Strong attacks against the Chon Thanh outpost have resulted in heavy casualties on both sides. A government push up Route 13 to provide security for the Chon Thanh evacuees continues to run into pockets of Communist strength.

5. In the upper delta provinces, the communists continue to shift their regiments in preparation for renewed military action. Some of these units are expected to attack My Tho City and to try to close Route 4 to Saigon. Government officials have been watching most of these movements closely, but admit they do not know the location of the 201st Regiment of the Communist 3rd Division, which has come down from Tay Ninh Province and is believed to be in the northern delta.

6. In Military Region 2, several hundred government troops are still present in several towns not yet occupied by the communists along the southern coast. The North Vietnamese have not occupied Nha Trang in force, and some remnants of government units remained at Cam Ranh airport as of late April 3. Some Marines, Airborne troops, and remnants of other army units have been filtering down to Phan Rang and are assembling on the town's airstrip. If the communists continue to move slowly into abandoned government areas, these small concentrations of troops may serve as assembly points for other stragglers.

7. The North Vietnamese have been flying helicopters into Hue and possibly Da Nang. There have been numerous reports of aircraft flying into Phu Bai airfield, south of Hue, and several indications that some flights went further south to Da Nang.

Possible Military Reorganization

25X1

8. The South Vietnamese Joint General Staff is proposing a nine-point program to increase the combat effectiveness and morale of its fighting forces. The major points of the program include:

1. Scrapping of the existing Corps structure.
2. Reorganization of ranger groups into light infantry divisions.
3. Integration of Popular Force and Regional Force units into the army.

25X1

CAMBODIAThe Tactical Situation

9. Khmer Communist attacks late on April 2 (Phnom Penh time) forced government units to abandon positions on the dike--five miles from Phnom Penh--that has formed part of the capital's northern defenses. As of late afternoon on April 3, government troops had regained some ground in the area but not the dike itself. Inconclusive fighting continued on most other battlefields around the capital, including the newly threatened Bassac River front southeast of the city.

10. [redacted] the Communists captured at least eight 105-mm. howitzers at Banam and Neak Luong on Tuesday and that insurgent forces along the lower Mekong River--perhaps as many as 5,000 troops--have begun moving toward Phnom Penh. Khmer Communist central committee orders calling in units from other outlying areas for increased attacks against Phnom Penh are being relayed to a number of insurgent battlefield commands.

11. Communist gunners fired over 20 rockets at Phnom Penh's Pochentong Airport during daylight hours on April 3. US airlift operations were not affected but two Khmer Air Force T-28s were destroyed. The Air Force's steady losses are being reflected in a much reduced level of tactical sorties.

The Supply Situation

12. As of April 2, stocks in Phnom Penh stood at the following levels: ammunition--15 days; fuel--15 days; rice-10 days. Although rice stocks are now dangerously low, charter aircraft can bring in more than enough on a daily basis from Saigon to meet minimum demands. Under current funding constraints, however, airdrops of rice and ammunition to isolated enclaves will have to be halted on April 11 because of a lack of pallets and parachutes. All available ammunition will have been delivered to Phnom Penh on April 17. Stocks of some types of ammunition will begin to run out shortly thereafter and ammunition stocks of all types will be exhausted by April 25.

Evacuation Status 25X1A2G

13. [redacted] assets remain on a 6 hour alert. By April 4, approximately 130 Americans and third-country nationals included in evacuation plans will have left Phnom Penh for Bangkok. This will reduce to about 1,000 the total number of persons (Americans, third-country nationals, and Cambodians) on the evacuation list. As of today, only the US, Laos, South Vietnam and South Koreans were maintaining any diplomatic personnel in Phnom Penh.